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MAYOR PEREZ CALLS ON CT DELEGATION TO OPPOSE BILL THAT WOULD HURT URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(November 2, 2005)--- Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez has called on U.S Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Congressman John Larson to oppose a bill gaining support in the U.S. House of Representatives that would essentially ban the use of eminent domain in any state, city or town that received federal funds for economic development while permitting power companies, gas& oil pipeline companies and railroads to continue to use the power of eminent domain to further their business interests. In a letter today to the Connecticut delegation opposing the "Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2005", Mayor Perez reiterated his position that abolishing eminent domain for economic development would harm Connecticut's efforts to reduce its unemployment rate which has climbed above the national average for the first time in many years and derail economic development efforts in urban communities like Hartford.

"This bill would prevent projects such as the Learning Corridor and Adriaen's Landing from ever being developed in the future. The Republicans in the House believe they know what's better for your local community than the General Assembly or your town council when it comes to creating jobs or attracting private investment. The Republicans in the House don't think states, cities or towns can be trusted to use eminent domain properly but they protect the rights of big power companies, railroads and gas and oil pipeline companies to use eminent domain to further their business interests. This legislation is a disaster for Connecticut's efforts to create jobs."

Mayor Perez has proposed the creation of a "property rights ombudsman" on the state level to provide information to property owners subject to eminent domain as well as to mediate at no charge between property owners and government agencies. Mayor Perez says, "We need to rebuild the public confidence that eminent domain will only be used as last resort by government for projects that have true public benefit and that property owners will be treated justly."